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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 287th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report by the Chairman on developments since the previous meeting

2. **The Chairman** said that on 6 May 2005 the Bureau of the Committee had briefed Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on its recent activities. The Under-Secretary-General had said that he would be paying close attention to the Committee's activities and asked that the Committee not lose sight of the overall needs of the Department for Political Affairs, especially within the context of the debate on the Secretary-General's reform proposals and the decisions emanating from that process.

3. On 5 August 2005, Ms. Somaia Barghouti, Observer for Palestine, had met with Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, in order to discuss cooperation between the Committee and the Department of Public Information. On 30 August 2005 the Bureau had issued a statement to the effect that Israel's recent removal of 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank was a promising step that could revive negotiations within the framework of the Road Map and move forward the peace process. In the statement the Bureau also noted that the Palestinian Authority had fully demonstrated its ability to control the situation throughout the current critical period, especially in the area of security, and expressed the hope that the positive momentum gained as a result of the removal of settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank would be followed by similar steps in the rest of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and breathe new life into the political process, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

4. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that, despite its reservations about the unilateral nature of Israel's actions, the Palestinian Authority welcomed the redeployment of the Israeli army and the removal of the illegal Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip as a positive step towards a peaceful and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. The Palestinian Authority had been working hard to coordinate its actions with the Israeli Government in an effort to resolve the issues arising from Israel's withdrawal, but Israel had not reciprocated and had not focused on the search for solutions based on international law.

5. Although agreement had been reached on a number of issues, many remained unresolved, and a political process must be launched to that end. In that context, the Palestinian Authority wished to reconfirm its sovereignty over the disputed territory and the geographical unity of its country, including the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli forces should withdraw completely from the Gaza Strip, and the legal status of the Gaza Strip must remain unchanged in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1907.

6. Furthermore, it was essential to lay down the economic and financial conditions required to facilitate the political process. In that regard, the Palestinian Authority welcomed the pledges of support made by the Group of Eight countries and urged that such support be provided as soon as possible. The removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which should be seen as a step forward in the implementation of international law, should be continued until all the settlements were removed. The process of withdrawing troops and removing settlements should be completed as soon as possible, along with all other pending issues relating to those actions, and should not obstruct the next stage of the political process. The Palestinian Authority would continue to negotiate in order to reach a rapid solution to those issues.

7. Future political actions must be implemented on a unilateral basis and all solutions should be negotiated solutions, because unilateral actions undermined the peace process and the implementation of the Road Map.

and frustrated the search for a lasting solution. The two-State solution must be based on the withdrawal of Israelis from the territories occupied in 1967, and the status of the 1949 armistice line must be reaffirmed. The solution of the Palestinian question was an essential prerequisite for achieving stability in the Middle East and for making progress in combating terrorism. The construction of the wall was contrary to international law and must be halted immediately. The illegality of settlements in Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, must be reaffirmed. The Palestinian Authority wished to reaffirm the illegality of the Israeli Government's actions in East Jerusalem, including the construction of the separation wall and the separation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank. Good-faith negotiations would require rapid decisions.

8. The Palestinian Authority would do everything in its power to ensure a return to stability and the Israeli Government, for its part, must end construction of the wall, halt the construction of further settlements, and release all Palestinian prisoners. The four major issues that must be resolved in order to achieve a lasting solution were the issues of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, the Israeli settlements, and borders. Neither party must take measures that were counter to the achievement of a lasting solution. The Palestinian Authority did not wish the border issue to be reopened.

9. Finally, in order to implement the commitments made at the 8 February 2005 Sharm Al-Sheikh summit, the Quartet must draft a new agenda for implementing the proposed solutions to the question of Palestine and establish a monitoring mechanism, as soon as possible, in accordance with the Road Map. Furthermore, active negotiations should take place between the two parties in order to ensure the establishment of a transitional mechanism, including the possibility of convening an international conference.

10. **The Chairman** said that the Observer for Palestine had emphasized the essential elements for a settlement of the Palestinian question. The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people should be congratulated for the responsible approach they had taken during the current difficult situation. They had demonstrated their ability to work together and to take responsibility for their own future.

11. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the statement of the Observer for Palestine deserved the Committee's closest attention, particularly as it had clarified the Palestinian position for the next phase of the peace process. The withdrawal of the Israelis from any occupied territory was a positive step towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement. His Government welcomed the withdrawal of the Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip and hoped to see further Israeli withdrawals so that the entire territory could be restored to the Palestinian people.

12. At the same time, however, his Government wished to draw the attention of the Committee and of the international community to the fact that many Israeli settlers had been moved, not to Israel, but to other occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan. His Government would do its utmost to ensure that those settlements did not remain. Israel should withdraw from all occupied territories and cease the establishment and expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the Syrian Golan, and should halt construction of the separation wall.

13. The upcoming sixtieth session of the General Assembly would provide an opportunity for certain parties to launch an assault on the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly itself and by the Committee. However, his delegation would keep the Committee informed of all such actions, and was confident that the membership of the United Nations would resist them. The Palestinian question must be resolved as a matter of urgency, but in a manner that guaranteed a just and comprehensive solution, as well as the historic and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

14. **The Chairman** said that the final point made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was particularly important and would help to heighten the Committee's vigilance.

Report by the Vice-Chairman on his attendance at the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Middle East Peace, 12 and 13 July 2005, Paris

15. **Mr. Farhâdi** (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman, said that the Conference, which had been held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), had brought together representatives of civil society organizations from different parts of the world to mobilize and coordinate new initiatives on the question of Palestine. There had been over 170 participants,

including representatives of 48 civil society organizations and 41 Governments.

16. The Conference had been held within a week of the one-year anniversary of the issuance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, of 9 July 2004, on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Despite the efforts of the international community, the Government of Israel had not halted construction of the wall; indeed, it had approved new sections of the wall, which would eventually incorporate the large settlements around East Jerusalem, on the Israeli side. Israel's continued establishment and expansion of its settlements were changing the demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; as a result, the socio-economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had worsened, preventing the Palestinian people from exercising their inalienable rights and undermining the vision of a two-State solution. It was in that context that the Committee had decided to keep the focus of the international community on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and highlight the significance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

17. At the final plenary meeting, Conference participants had adopted a plan of action which urged international, national and regional movements and organizations to support the call of Palestinian civil society for a global campaign of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against business entities that profited from, and contributed to the Israeli occupation, aimed at applying pressure on Israel to end the occupation and fully comply with international law and with all relevant United Nations resolutions. The Steering Committee of the Conference had requested the Committee to help facilitate the implementation of the commitments made by the Conference.

18. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) welcomed the plan of action, which would help define the position of the international community with regard to the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

19. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to take note of the report.

20. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.